

SIKKIM



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**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS & HERITAGE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

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NOTIFICATION

A BACKDROP

In Sikkim there are old palaces, gonpas, mandirs, devithans and ritual centres of the ethnic communities. The most frequented among the several heritage sites are Rabdentse Palace Ruins, Dubdi Gonpa and the Coronation Throne at Norbugang, Yoksum. These sites are under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India. Besides, there are other living heritage places and sites which are unprotected. They constitute a unique civilization legacy, as valuable as the monuments legally protected by the Archeological Survey of India. This legacy is being steadily eroded as a result of insensitive modernization and urbanization, and the fact that it does not command the same respect as legally protected monuments. Many unprotected heritages sites are still in use, and the manner in which they continue to be kept in use represents the 'living' heritage. This heritage is manifest in both tangible and intangible forms and in its diversity defines the composite culture of Sikkim. Beyond its role as a historic document, this unprotected heritage embodies values of enduring relevance to contemporary Sikkimese society, thus making it worthy of conservation.

As on date, this 'living' heritage is not legally protected. The monasteries and ritual sites are subject to demolition or unsympathetic interventions. The knowledge of traditional building skills with which it is associated with, is also in danger of being lost in the absence of patronage and official recognition. Intervention on the sacred lakes has become another issue which needs to be addressed. Conserving the 'living' heritage therefore, requires immediate intervention of the line Departments viz: Tourism, Forest, Ecclesiastical, Culture, Building and Housing and Urban Development and Housing Departments etc.

Conserving the unprotected architectural heritage and sites ensures the survival of the State's sense of place and its very character in the present 'global' environment. It offers the opportunity not only to conserve the past, but also offers an opportunity to define the future.

Culture is the product of human civilization. It is "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual,

material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. It is culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself, makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgment and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own 'achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations"

In a state like Sikkim, full of diversity, we must learn to live in fruitful co-existence and inter-cultural harmony. Peace is a comprehensive enterprise that requires a transformation in our thinking, sense of values, will and resources and solidarity of all. Now therefore, with a view to promote and strengthen those cultural embodiments and manifestations of these thoughts, values and ethos of peace, the State Government is pleased to notify the following Cultural Policy of Sikkim, namely:-

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- (1) The Government shall take up strategies for the promotion, preservation and enrichment of the culture of Sikkim which is composite and plural in nature. The diverse range of creative activities e.g. literary, performing arts, folk and tribal arts and the various forms of artistic self-expression by individuals, specialists, or by communities is proposed to be given the utmost attention.
- (2) The old traditional houses of Lepchas, Bhutia and Nepalis, which have been enriching our culture should be preserved, protected and strengthened. Likewise, caves, water bodies, old monasteries and temples should also be preserved and protected.
- (3) The policy would stress on an integrated approach to cultural properties. Strategies would be made for co-ordination amongst the Departments of Cultural Affairs and Heritage, Ecclesiastical Affairs Department, Human Resource Development Department, Sports & Youth Affairs, Information and Public Relations, Social Welfare and Tourism, and Forest for furtherance and strengthening of the cause of culture.
- (4) Literacy is an essential condition for people's cultural development. It would therefore be necessary to ensure community participation at all levels including formal, non-formal and informal agencies such as panchayats, local bodies, etc.
- (5) Intangible heritage in its different manifestations and ways shall be preserved. The policy recognizes the need for preserving and documenting those aspects of classical, folk, tribal, ethnic, rural and community culture traditions which are rare but vanishing and in danger of extinction due to social change, market forces, technological onslaught, globalization, etc.
- (6) Endeavour would also be made to preserve, protect and document tangible heritage viz: monasteries, monument, historical places, temples, devithans, antiquities, art treasures, public and private records of cultural and artistic importance in an integrated approach in collaboration with other line Departments of the State;
- (7) As far as possible the State would play a catalytic role with only "an arm's length intervention" in the efforts for development of culture. The pursuit of cultural creativity has to be seen as a self-reflexive activity.

- (8) Understanding that culture is a crucial part of development deserving substantial investment and that the investment so far made in the cultural dimension is not adequate, the policy envisages to enhance investment for development/preservation of cultural properties with the broad social needs and its intrinsic value.
- (9) Autonomy in the functioning of the Government agencies like the Sikkim Akademi and Sikkim Sahitya Parishad for promotion of several arts and literatures shall be maintained and strengthened.
- (10) Archive is a custodian of Records. Records are part of our documentary heritage; (to mention what we propose to do).
- (11) "Record Creating Agency" means any Department or Office of Government of Sikkim, Public Sector Undertaking, Statutory/Non Statutory Bodies and Corporation and Committee published by the State Government. All these organizations are responsible for their currents, semi-current and noncurrent records. And also for periodical appraisal and elimination of ephemeral records and for orderly and systematic transfer of records of permanent value to the State Archives;
- (12) The Cultural Affairs and Heritage Department being the nodal Department for all the Government libraries in Sikkim shall endeavour to develop all the libraries in Sikkim with modern technologies. Close coordination amongst the librarians of the State is necessary for the overall development of libraries;
- (13) Anything not covered in the foregoing articles can be incorporated into the body of the objective if it is conducive to the promotion and enrichment of culture and heritage.

2. STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Although the objectives set out in the Cultural Policy of Sikkim are challenging and require a well-defined strategy for implementation, the Government proposes to achieve these objectives by pursuing the following strategies; namely:-

- (1) The State will assign high priority for preservation, promotion and enrichment of culture in its diverse manifestations and endeavours. It has a responsibility to foster and nurture the seminal values which find creative expression in arts, letters and other cultural aspects. Nevertheless, direct State intervention needs to be avoided. Though the State must provide funds and facilities for such activities on a scale commensurate with the needs in the context of the link between them and the plans to improve the quality of life, it must not be involved in any direct grant giving activities. It is perceived that such avoidance would also eliminate various forms of intervention. It has already been stated in the articles of objectives that the State would play a role with only "an arm's length intervention" in the development efforts of culture;
- (2) It is proposed to set up a body entitled "Sikkim Cultural Advisory Council" comprising not more than 25(twenty five) top level experts and eminent persons in various fields of culture which would evolve well thought-out strategies, mechanism and guidelines in order to carry out successfully and meaningfully the objectives of preserving, strengthening and enriching Sikkim culture. The members of the Council shall be nominated by the State Government. It shall have a tenure of three years having only an advisory capacity. The details of composition and terms of reference will be framed by the State Government;

- (3) Perceiving that culture is a crucial part of development deserving substantial investment and that the investments so far made for its promotion and enrichment have not been adequate, it is proposed to enhance quantum of investment on culture, commensurate with the broad social needs and its intrinsic value. Attempts at making cultural factors an integral part of the strategies designed to achieve balanced development shall be made. These strategies should always be devised in the light of the historical, social and cultural context of our society;
- (4) To maintain communal harmony, action plans should ensure the broadest possible participation by the individual and society in cultural life without distinction of status, education, caste, creed, language, sex, ethnicity, minority or fringe groups. All cultural programmes and actions should not confine to the towns and urban areas but reach out to the rural and interior areas;
- (5) The public support and patronage in the promotion of culture would be encouraged instead of depending only on State patronage. A process of decentralization in cultural promotion shall be adopted. Individuals, voluntary organizations and corporate bodies shall play an important role in the cultural process;
- (6) There is an increasing perception that there are areas of co-operation, collaboration and net-working among several Departments and agencies of the State Government to be adopted for effective projection and implementation of cultural processes. Departments of Cultural Affairs and Heritage, Human Resources & Development, Tourism, Sports and Youth Affairs, Information and Public Relations, Social Welfare, Forest etc., can tie up by pulling together their resources and infrastructural facilities in implementing several programmes that will project our history, heritage and culture;
- (7) Historical sites and places of cultural significance can be kept vibrating and reverberating with the rhythms, visuals and movements of our cultural ethos. The Department of Cultural Affairs and Heritage shall formulate a Heritage Act for declaring old historical buildings/ bungalows, traditional houses, sacred lakes and water bodies, sites as Heritage sites. Before the formulation of Heritage Act, identification of sites and preparation of list should be prepared by the Department in consultation with the experts;
- (8) A separate Heritage Management Cell (HMC) shall be created within the Department where experts from outside as well as within the state shall be involved for monitoring conservation/ preservation works of Heritage sites,
- (9) As stated in the National Policy on Education 1986, cultural content shall be introduced from the early levels of education upwards not as an additional but as an integrated component in the syllabus and curricula to enable children and youth to develop sensitivity to environment, beauty, creativity, harmony and refinement and be aware of our ancient traditions and ultimate values. Research, teaching and training in various disciplines will be strengthened so as to replenish specialized manpower in them,
- (10) Our rich mosaic of folk and tribal cultures needs comprehensive and systematic documentation over and above the classical, traditional and visual arts which are in danger of extinction. Documentation of these cultural forms will inevitably include their oral literature, visual and performing art traditions and also artifacts. Old palace ruins and sites of historical and cultural importance and eminent cultural personalities should also be documented and preserved by pulling together resources of several State departments;

- (11) Museums are not merely places to house our ancient heritage. They have to function as centres of learning and creative awareness. Attractive programmes which would interest the children and the youth need to be developed by each museum on a regular basis;
- (12) A dynamic state cultural digital data bank would be established at Archives Building to ensure a systematic record of all cultural properties and in order to transfer the records of permanent value to the State Archives, the State Government shall enact suitable legislation on the subject.
- (13) Healthy awareness for transferring the old records should be held within four districts followed by a suitable training/re-orientation programme by the State Archives for the staff in-charge of the record rooms of the Record Creating Agency of different organizations,
- (14) The existing and the proposed museums should keep separate sections for the exhibition of artifacts and cultural materials of different art forms,
- (15) For the smooth functioning of Archives section as well as Museum, the Department will create a separate service with the creation of sufficient technical posts;
- (16) A cultural centre in each district of Sikkim shall be set up. A composite infrastructural facility like auditorium, art exhibition room, a museum, a library and spaces for performances of several art forms shall be made available for each of them. It would serve as a centre of multi-faceted activities and learning abounding with cultural ethos. A net-working of cultural programmes which may include festivals, sale of traditional food items, handloom and handicraft products shall be systematically implemented in these centres to create awareness and participation by all. Entries can also be charged within affordable rates which can help generation of income;
- (17) Emphasis should be given to cultural programmes being carried out throughout the State which would attract the attention and willing participation of children and the youth of all communities. Children and young people should be given a cultural identity and made visible everywhere in the society. They have the right to be seen and exist in the world. Their rights include the right to rest and leisure, play and recreation and to freely participate in cultural and artistic life. Creative energy is necessary for cultural development. Therefore they must participate in the cultural processes;
- (18) Rural, folk and tribal artists and artisans, whose art creations generally turn into crafts, would be promoted. A more inclusive concept of art which encompasses the artistic contribution of all segments whether urban, folk, tribal and community shall be, encouraged;
- (19) As the policy insists on avoidance of direct Government involvement in cultural process, the role of the Government cultural agencies has become crucial. The autonomy of the cultural agencies of the State Government like the Sikkim Akademi and Nepali Sahitya Parisad shall be maintained and strengthened. At the same time, they must be made responsible in their areas of concern and accountable as well;
- (20) Making of musical instruments, traditional artistic costumes and ornaments is important area which has not received sufficient public attention and is currently facing a grave crisis. A scheme would be prepared to ensure that young trainees and apprentices are encouraged to receive training in these activities,

- (21) The development of fine arts needs to be accelerated and strengthened. Several branches of fine arts are required to be introduced by expanding the facilities in the art college under the State Government. A State Art Gallery is needed to be set up. Art galleries are dynamic centres of educating taste. A comprehensive benchmark survey and documentation of various folk and tribal arts including visual arts would be taken up. They should be suitably exhibited in art galleries and museums,
- (22) Organizations of fine arts in the State should be encouraged to bring out monographs and books on visual and plastic arts, organize exhibitions, workshops and interactions at frequent intervals, expose artists and their works in national and international exhibitions. Suitable schemes are required to be taken up to sponsor deserving artists to undergo studies in reputed fine arts institutions in the country,
- (23) The perspective and ethos of literature in the State needs to be more widely disseminated and appreciated. Publication of books, literary journals, purchase of books would be encouraged. Agencies of the State Government, voluntary organizations and corporate sectors should also be persuaded to extend support in these regards;
- (24) The two theatre halls inside the Manan Bhawan shall be utilized for all forms of theatre whether traditional, contemporary or creative. The State Government would encourage performing maximum local theatre show. Mini theatre inside the Manan Kendra would also be utilized for students of schools and colleges;
- (25) Research in the different arts is necessary for their enrichment. Research Fellowships in these arts shall be instituted;
- (26) A network of libraries throughout the State will be set up over and above strengthening the State Central Library and the district libraries. The Department shall utilize the concept of e-library within all four districts as well as sub-divisions, library centers and utilize modern technologies to maintain records;
- (27) The Cultural Affairs and Heritage Department being the nodal Department of all the Government libraries, the Department will create a proper library service for the smooth functioning of libraries,
- (28) For the quality service of libraries in Sikkim, the Department will make it mandatory to undergo trainings/workshops for all the librarians.

By order and in the name of the Governor.

**Secretary
Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department**